

INSTRUCTIONS

Step 1: You will listen to an article about April Fools' Day. The article is 4 1/2 minutes long. Listen only, and don't worry about understanding everything.

Step 2: Look at the questions. Read and understand them, then listen again. As you are listening, try to answer the questions in your head. Don't write the answers yet. Next, listen again and write the answers this time. Compare your answers with a partner.

Step 3: Read the article. Check in your dictionary any unknown words. Now listen again. Can you understand more?

Step 4: Listen! Listen! Listen! Listen to the article on the train or in your free time. Each time you listen, you will slowly improve!

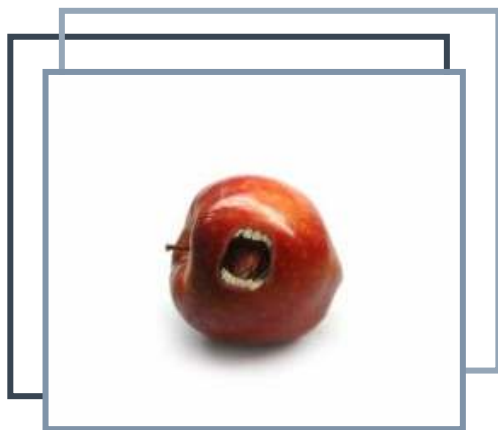
QUESTIONS

Answer the questions to check comprehension. If you don't know an answer, don't worry. Skip it. Then listen again.

1. What happens on April 1st every year?
2. What is another name for April Fools' Day?
3. According to the article, how long has April 1st been a holiday?
4. Why was spring considered the start of the New Year a long time ago?
5. Who started playing pranks on April Fools' Day?
6. Some people resisted the change to January, or didn't know about it. What happened to them?
7. What happened in 1980?
8. According to the BBC's prank, what would happen when Pluto and Jupiter aligned?
9. What is a "whopper?"
10. What did the restaurant do to the "whopper?"

the ARTICLE

April Fools' Day is an unofficial holiday celebrated by many people around the world on April 1st. It's a day where people revel in playing all kinds of tricks on friends, family, and peers. Another name for April Fools' Day is All Fools' Day.



No one really knows where or when the holiday began. It seems most likely that the holiday has slowly evolved into its present form over hundreds—maybe thousands, even—of years. Both the Romans and the Hindus had holidays around the vernal equinox. So we can guess that the origins probably began with festivities held at this time of year. In ages past, people often considered this as the New Year, because it marked a change in seasons. With the disappearance of snow and cold weather, people could prepare the fields for crops. There was the birth of livestock and other animals, too. Nature came out of its months' long slumber.

But how did ancient festivals welcoming spring get connected with playing pranks?

Historians believe we have the French to thank for practical jokes on April 1st. Although most of Europe already celebrated New Year's in January, France was one of the first countries to officially declare January 1st as New Year's Day. Traditional gifts, greetings, and visits to welcome the New Year also switched days. But quite a few people resisted the change, while others hadn't heard of the declaration. Both were ridiculed as fools, and people played pranks on them. The tradition continued, and eventually spread to the rest of Europe, and then the world.

Have you ever heard of these April Fools' Day classics?

- Ⓢ In 1965, the BBC TV announced the creation of "smellovision." Aromas from the TV studio would be broadcast to TV sets across the nation.
- Ⓢ In 1980, the BBC said that Big Ben would go digital. People angrily complained about changing the world-renown English landmark. The BBC service in Japanese even announced that the hands would be sold to the first four people to call the station.
- Ⓢ Again, the BBC announced that an astronomical event would precisely align Pluto and Jupiter. The result would lesson the Earth's gravity. If anyone jumped in the air at exactly 9:47 a.m. on April 1st, they would feel a strange, floating feeling. The BBC received hundreds of phone calls. One woman even said that she and her eleven friends had floated around the room!
- Ⓢ And last, in 1998, Burger King in America advertised a "left handed Whopper" hamburger. It had been designed for left-handed customers, and all the ingredients were rotated 180 degrees. Thousands of people rushed to the restaurant to try the new sandwich, and many more ordered the original "right-handed" version.

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES (optional)

1. Which paragraph was the easiest to listen to? Which paragraph was the most difficult? Look at the vocabulary and sentence structure, then think why one paragraph was easy and another difficult.

2. Listen for these words, understand the context, then try to repeat the information from the sentence:

unofficial (paragraph 1)

ages past (paragraph 2)

the disappearance (paragraph 2)

traditional (paragraph 4)

had floated (paragraph 8)

had been designed (paragraph 9)

3. Listen and write the sentences:

It seems most likely that... (paragraph 2)

Although most of Europe... (paragraph 4)

The BBC service in Japanese even announced that... (paragraph 7)

ANSWERS

QUESTIONS

1. April Fools' Day is an unofficial holiday where people revel in playing all kinds of tricks on friends, family, and peers.
2. Another name for April Fools' Day is All Fools' Day.
3. It seems most likely that the holiday has slowly over hundreds—maybe thousands, even—of years.
4. Because it marked a change in seasons. With the disappearance of snow and cold weather, people could prepare the fields for crops. There was the birth of livestock and other animals, too. Nature came out of its months' long slumber.
5. Historians believe we have the French to thank for practical jokes on April 1st.
6. They were ridiculed as fools, and people played pranks on them.
7. The BBC said that Big Ben would go digital.
8. If anyone jumped in the air at exactly 9:47 a.m. on April 1st, they would feel a strange, floating feeling.
9. A "whopper" is a hamburger from a restaurant called Burger King.
10. It designed a hamburger for left-handed customers, with all the ingredients were rotated 180 degrees.

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES - Listen and write the sentences.

...the holiday has slowly evolved into its present form over hundreds—maybe thousands, even—of years.

...already celebrated New Year's in January, France was one of the first countries to officially declare January 1st as New Year's Day.

...the hands would be sold to the first four people to call the station